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Chapman, John Jay, 1862 -

The Two Philosophers a quaint sad Comedy

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Dramatis Personæ.

REGIUS . . . . *Professor of philosophy, ancient and modern.*

THEISTICUS . . *Professor and practiser of modern philosophy.*

CAVEATOR . . . . . *A lawyer.*

FIRST STUDENT.

SECOND STUDENT, AND OTHER STUDENTS.

MARY . . . . . *A maid-servant.*

The scene is laid in Cambridge, in a lecture-room, and in Regius's study.

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THE TWO PHILOSOPHERS:

A Quaint, Sad Comedy.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *A Lecture-room.* REGIUS *in his doctor's robes, and students before him.*

REGIUS.

I've studied every science round,
And many a doctrine have I found;
Greek and German roots of thought
In years of labor have I sought;
And every gnarled and eyed potato
Out of Zoroaster and Plato
Do I plant in your young heads,
And watch 'em sprout as in hot-beds.
The seed from Aristotle's patch
(I tell you, t' get it I had to scratch)
And all the living germs in Zeno,
Precious as Mexican *oro fino*,
Bottled I have for future culture:
I pounced upon them like a vulture.
I scooped the elusive Schopenhauer,
And drained and strained and tried and dried him;
He's in my bag this many an hour,

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With wizened Immanuel Kant beside him,
Desiccated Hegel and Lotz, —
None good without my name on the pots, —
That's the use of us philosophers,
That's the reason they make a fuss over us:
We have picked the plums of learning,
Dried 'em into raisins and prunes:
Open your mouth and shut your eyes,
And we give you something to make you wise,
Liebig's Extract of Descartes
— A syllabus worth a folio —
An ounce goes as far as twenty quarts
Of any other digest I know:
Digested till it *won't digest.*
— Any further you understand —
My pickled Locke is the very best
Condensed — evaporated — compressed —
Heft it a moment in your hand.

CHORUS OF STUDENTS.

O such dainties: sublimated
Essences of education.
Since the world was first created,
Since we called ourselves a nation,
Was there ever joined before
Modern thought and ancient lore!
Master, master! only throw us
Leavings — from the feast you show us.

REGIUS.

Good! This spirit I commend:
It is a hopeful feature,

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The soul of learning is to lend
All reverence to the Teacher.

My last good gift before I am gone
Over the seas, for go I must
Not for very long, I trust
Shall be a little thing of my own.
For I am to take a holiday:
God keep you while I am away.
Now, listen with your sharpest ears,
To catch my wisdom as it appears.

To be is to know:
But to know is to be;
For knowing and being,
Like looking and seeing,
Are two very different things, seems to me.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

Would it give you much pain
To say that again?

REGIUS.

Apt scholars a few:
But to gratify you,
If you'll listen to me,
I'll say the same thing in a different key:

To drink is to live:
And to live is to drink.

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For living and drinking,
Like sneezing and winking,
Are two very different things, as I think.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

I think it is plain.
Don't say it again.

REGIUS.

Why, novice, I've hundreds of themes in my head:
Orphic sentences, embryo theses,
Which, worked up in classical form, might be made
Really great philosophical essays.
(*He relapses into philosophical abstraction.*)

VARIATION I.

If to know — (what's to know?)
Is to be — (what's to be?)
The one seems involved in the other,
It seems our conceptions of each,
(*Pianissimo*) *what are they?*
Must be much like sister and brother.

Coda: for, after all, we reach the same conclusion by whatever end we begin: for (leading back to theme) minor 2–4 time.

VARIATION II.

Knowing, as all men must, that they *but* know
The things their being suffers them to see,
How can their human wisdom cheat them so
To think there's any knowledge save to be?

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For what is knowledge save a larger life:
More being the expansion of *what Is*,
And what is learning but a constant strife
Between the spirit and its boundaries?

VARIATION III.

Therefore (always a major chord) —
Therefore to know is to be:
O conquest! O glory! O joy!
Therefore we eat of the fruit of the tree
In ecstasy without alloy.
Therefore your triumph is nigh,
Philosophers, knowers, and sages,
Therefore they lift ye on high
And honor ye throughout the ages.

But to end thus would be vulgar and most unlike a man who knows the soft, descending cadences of romantic love and their philosophical significance: therefore I strike and hold a deep bass note.

VARIATION IV.

TO KNOW.

When the robins at eve in their nest
Have twittered themselves to their feathery rest,
Do they know, do you think
Do they know, they are blest? (*Bass moves up*).

NOT KNOW.

— When they whisper at earliest dawn
Before the white curtains of morning are drawn,
When the dewdrops are gray in the mist on the lawn —

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BUT TO BE.

But to be for one moment as they,
Not recking, not dreading, the gift of the day,
Awake, eager, happy, intemperate, gay!

CLOSING CHORDS.

To be and not to know,
This is to know indeed.
Despoil thyself of knowledge? I say not so;
Rather, inform thy knowledge with thy soul.

(A trite ending, but good. Schumann would have ended with a question. You will say these variations are German; but music is German.)

Now, I take my holiday:
God keep you while I am away.
Nunc dimittis hilariter et celeriter.

ACT I.

SCENE II. — *Same as Scene I.*

THEISTICUS AND SCHOLARS.

My good young boys, I joy to see
You all come near to welcome me.
While your dear teacher is away,
I'll give you lessons every day.
Now, tell me first where you left off.
Have you got as far as Puffendorff?
I usually begin at Zend,
But I'm ready to start at the other end,

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If that's the custom you prefer;
Let us begin at Ferrier.
My curriculum's round, and it makes not a pin
Of difference at what point you go in.
The main thing now for us is to *begin*.
Parliamo, Dante says, *colle labbra*.
Now, young ones, what's your abracadabra?

FIRST SCHOLAR.

To be is to know, and to know is to be,
Something of that sort, it seems to me;
I knew it before I came into the room.

THEISTICUS.

Then go out again and keep on straight home.
Now, then, Secundus, at this tune
We sha'n't reach the categories by June!
Begin, I say, for by this gavel
I never yet saw a class to beat me,
Nor rode a horse that could unseat me,
By St. Christopher! now scratch gravel!

SECOND SCHOLAR.

To know is to know and to be —

THEISTICUS.

Great Balaam!
Did I not send one man from class
For saying that? I used to whale 'em;
Why *not* beat a boy, if a boy's an ass?
Take warning, the rest: I stand no tricks.
Now, young Socrates, cut sticks!
Next! Now, Tertius, what's your notion?

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THIRD SCHOLAR.

Thales believed that the stars had motion.

THEISTICUS.

Good, sir! right, sir! stick to fact;
You're a fellow of some tact.
Thales is good, very good, A 1:
We can't go on till we've begun.
Now that the dolts have left the room,
We'll take the Greek ones as they come,
As the little books invite us.
Now, then, Quartus Heraclitus.

FOURTH SCHOLAR.

Please, sir, he wasn't in my book;
I am a pupil of Joseph Cook;
I only know questions of the day,
As, "Are we a nation?" and "Why people pray,"
And that old fellow you spoke of this minute,
Beside Joseph Cook, why, he isn't in it.

THEISTICUS.

Zeno and Xerxes! who taught this class?
I've got a menagerie on my hands.
Each scholar is given a looking-glass,
And, ape or zebra, there he stands,
Gaping and posturing at his image,
And the Rex Ludorum enjoys the scrimmage.
The new idea of education
Seems indeed to be taking hold.
You provide a boy with a summer vacation,
And give him a handful or two of gold,

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Then watch the result. For what fool thing
He does, or dreams, or prattles,
It's all in the way of developing
To fit him for life's battles.
Well, Zoroaster, fire away!
What is it that makes people pray?

FOURTH SCHOLAR.

First, because of a sense of sin,
For Hegel says the religion in —

THEISTICUS.

I thought it was coming. Now begin,
Hold up your hand, and say after me,
That never in your life again,
Nor in any other life to come,
Known to any theology,
You will ever open your mouth, but be dumb
On the subject of philosophy.

The sacred name of Hegel I
Alone of all the world may speak.
'Twas left for me to raise on high,
And cap his mountain with a peak.

Subjects, like provinces, are owned,
Conquered, possessed of right,
And some, on kingly thought enthroned,
May rule by kingly might.

Let trespassers beware! Ye can
Quote Socrates, or Schlegel,
The Bible, or the Alcoran,
But, oh! beware of Hegel.

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Listen, ye thoughtless architects
Who build on other people's tracts,
Spreading your thievish plan.
Kant, Hegel, Abbot, ye may seek,
Not find, a fourth from ancient Greek,
Down to the imbecile critique
That in some journal lifts its squeak
Upon the life of man.

America! It was for thee
I raised my mound of fame,
And, stretching out from sea to sea,
American philosophy,
Protected by my hand shall be
American philosophy,
Conterminous with my name.

The pauper learning of the East
Shall now be used no more:
The foreign prophet, sage, and priest
Is banished from our shore.

I draw, as Jefferson once drew,
Our solemn declaration
Of independence, and that, too,
Of all the alien tyrant crew
To which we philosophers had to Kou-tou,
Till a man should come who should do as I do,
Proclaim us a free nation.

You will take as your lesson for next time
This maxim: "*Cave Canem*,"
Which means, Don't play the fool while I'm
At the head of this aula insanum.

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ACT II.

SCENE III. — *Same as Scene I.*

REGIUS, TO CLASS.

Pupils and followers of mine,
Again I come to your embrace,
Filled, as it were, with much new wine,
And longing to be in my old place;
How much you must have grown in grace
And gained in knowledge I divine.

A joy it is to learn, I know,
A joy in all men's reach,
And therefore little prized; but, oh,
The joy it is to teach!

Tell me, my Primus. Let's begin
With a general proposition,
And then work outward from within,
Till we reach our first position.

And since we speak of culture,
What is culture, do you think?

FIRST SCHOLAR.

Culture is spiritual food
And intellectual drink.

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REGIUS.

A petty saying, — I confess
Not quite what I expected.
Let some one make another guess,
Or, rather, having rejected
The metaphor as gravy
Not good for the digestion,
Let him very simply give
The very meat of the question.

FIFTH SCHOLAR.

Good master, if I might be bold,
By the tail of the subject to take hold,
And reason by induction,
I think I can tell by the qualities
Of culture, what it really is,
Just as men slowly empty barrels,
Draining them by suction.

And, *Firstly*, Culture moves in spirals
(Plutarch infers it in his morals);
Then Culture goes upward, and to the left,
And you will see, if you follow my drift,
That Culture must be like a kite —

REGIUS.

That can't be quite right.
What you say, I'll be bound,
Has a very Hegelian sound.
Who has been smoking Hegel here?
I smell the smell of German beer.

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That's an idea *I* never brought you
In all the subjects I have taught you.
It has a very agnostic smack;
I am very glad that I came back!
Now, reason backward in your mind,
And tell me, if you'll be so kind,
Where you can have picked it up.

FIFTH SCHOLAR.

think Theisticus let it drop.

REGIUS.

Who's he? Oh, that north German pup,
One of the Hegelian litter.
He did not mention Hegel, I hope!
I seem to perceive an audible titter.
Speak out, now Quintus! what's the matter?
Did the creature dare to teach his trash
To my half-educated class?
Two years before their Hegel course?
Before they were able to detect
And track his errors to their source?
They are mere boys; what can you expect?

And he — an acolyte of the profession,
To claim an apostolic succession,
To start a petty provincial schism
Devoted to his Hegelianism!

I salted Hegel long ago.
My essay on Hegel *is* an essay,
Read it — it is the ultimatum.
Now comes Theisticus with his say.

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O preposterous! I hate him
For his *ipse dixit* air.
The quack, the gypsy, astrologer,
To specialize our noble science,
Whose very pride it is to embrace
All the thought of the human race;
No man whatever be his status,
Within ten miles of Boston State House,
May publish or print, no matter what high sense,
On Hegel, without our oracle's license.

Oh, shame and sin, for a grown man,
Vanity! what canst thou not?
If a man has a hobby in his brain,
He'll sacrifice, he cares not what,
He'll stoop to any sort of action,
He'll wreck a philosophical soul,
Just for a moment's satisfaction;
Just to show his perfect control.

Shame, Theisticus! shame again!
You are a coward and a thief!
What can the world do to such men?
What can it do to bring them to grief?
Scholars, I warn you every one,
Of this man, Theisticus;
By his doctrines are undone
All the good work done by us.
Don't for a moment with them dally;
I warn you of them professionally.

What can I do now that shall make
Right prevail, and scotch this snake?

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Ha! I have it, I will look
Over again and review his book.
Get me paper and ink and pens,
Quills, quires, and quarts! spare no expense;
This review shall be a caution
To snakes that is — for all futurity,
This snake shall never come to maturity.
A warning I tell you — *Vox clamantis*,
Caveant populi, ne quis credat
Seductorem. That motto of Dante's
Over Hell's gate, most apt for his cant is.
Don't let anybody read it!
It's a snare and a delusion,
Bad philosophy, bad reason,
False, misleading, a confusion,
A kind of intellectual treason.
Come, boys, quick, I'm ready now,
I give no quarter in this row;
And quarter's not the thing I want,
Boys! *Morituri vos salutant!*

ACT III.

SCENE I. — REGIUS'S *study. Books, bottles, and philosophical apparatus lying about.* REGIUS *in slippers and dressing-gown, writing.*

REGIUS.

Ah! it is good to do one's duty;
Now I can attack my work.
I have flayed the Marsyas,
Chopped him into tutti frutti,

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Dragged his faults from where they lurk,
And exposed him for an ass.
His looks henceforward will betray it,
I have keel-hauled him, tho' I say it.

Wounded in his reputation,
Injured in his pride,
Now he feels the castigation
Which he cannot hide.

Strange the vigor it infuses,
Doing a good deed.
How my very blood enthuses
When I see him bleed!

Men no more will stop to hear him;
Men no more will ever fear him.
They'll despise his talk.
I have crushed him,
I have bust him.
I'm the cock o' the walk.
Now a tenfold life inspires me
To write for the noble college that hires me.
(*Sits down at desk.*)

(*Enter* CAVEATOR, *a lawyer dressed in black, and very solemn.*)

REGIUS.

Ah, good friend! a pleasant day.
I hope you have a moment to stay.
Long I have wanted to meet for a chat;
Have a cigar, and take off your hat.

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CAVEATOR.

My errand is somewhat serious.
Good friend, you've got yourself in a muss,
Along of that fellow Theisticus.

REGIUS.

He! Don't be concerned for that:
I killed the man as dead as a rat.

CAVEATOR.

Dead or alive, its likely to end
In awful trouble for you, my friend.

REGIUS.

Who? What? How? Not dead, you say?
Can a human being read my review
And not be convinced he's cold as clay,
And dressed and trussed like a barbecue?

CAVEATOR (*unrolls a bill-poster six feet long*).

Read, propend, reflect, decide.
Perhaps, after all, it's a Barmecide.

REGIUS (*reads*).

"Notice to whom it may concern,
Namely, all decent men;
But chiefly to all who teach or learn,
Or think, or wield the pen.
To Harvard's learned faculties,
And to her overseers,
To every one of her trustees,
Patrons and fosterers,

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To all the culture of the nation —
Greeting and salutation!"

Very smart! It seems to me a
Preface to some panacea.

(*Continuing.*)

"Notice is hereby given that one
Of your professors in your college
Has made a scurvy attack upon
The American school of knowledge,
Which said attack is couched in words
Unmeasured and profane,
And seems to show, conclusively,
The writer is insane.
But sane or mad, the writer is
Grossly devoid of truth,
And wickedly incompetent
To have the charge of youth.

REGIUS (*growing agitated*).

"The undersigned is singled out
By this malignant man
For his peculiar vengeance,
To ruin, if he can —
Because he loves the American system,
He aimed at him a deadly blow,
But, by God's grace, he missed him.
The name of the assassin,
His name who pulled the trigger,
Is on your college books."

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REGIUS.

(O grief!
The print is growing bigger).
"It is professor Josias Josephus Jeremiah
Regius. For further details, those seeking may inquire
Of me, the undersigned, at my official house.
GEORGIUS GREGORIUS XAVIER GOTTFRIED THEISTICUS."

REGIUS (*staggers*).

Water — I faint — I fear from this,
Some climax in the next act,
— From that small bottle over there.
'Tis my Platonic extract.
What can he do! What *can* he do! —
I had not thought of placards;
O thou divine philosophy,
Thy ranks are full of blackguards.
O Warner! why didst thou not warn?

CAVEATOR.

I don't see what he *mayn't* do.
His actions are for larceny,
Libel, and Quo-Warranto.

REGIUS.

Can he do all? Be open, now.
Suppose he does his worst —

CAVEATOR.

Courage! It has occurred to me —
That we shall *sue him first.*
We will enjoin him, tie him up,

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Bond him to keep the peace,
Put gyves of law upon his wrists,
Ne exeats on his knees.
I have a letter all prepared,
Which threatens in it rage.
(I leave the threats indefinite,
It's wisest at this stage.)

Sign it, then give your morning task
The labor it deserves.
The law is a most cooling drink,
Quieting to the nerves.

REGIUS (*signs*).

O heavy day! O tedious hours!
That on each other tread,
The golden clouds of victory
Are now all changed to lead.

ACT IV.

THE GREAT SCENE. — *A semi-circular classroom with a cock-pit in the centre and rising benches about. The scholars file in one by one.*

FIRST SCHOLAR.

Hast thou seen anything of our master?

SECOND SCHOLAR.

Not since Friday.

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FIRST SCHOLAR.

Very strange.

THIRD SCHOLAR.

He has been much cast down since he began receiving the unsigned letters.

FOURTH SCHOLAR.

They say Anonymous is a coward, else he would sign his name —

THIRD SCHOLAR.

And suppose he had no name, not having been baptized?

FOURTH SCHOLAR.

Then is it because he dreads holy water, and he is both a villain and a coward.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

The letters are milky stuff.

THIRD SCHOLAR.

Hast seen one? Hist! I found it in his hat. (*Reads.*) "Many have been killed by philosophy, and thou — thou shalt die a natural death."

FIRST SCHOLAR.

Why shies our master at this? It is bombast. He must be much broken in spirit.

THIRD SCHOLAR.

Do you not see the double meaning? It is a threat, so he thinks, to take his life. It much disturbs him.

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FIRST SCHOLAR.

Comes it from Theisticus?

THIRD SCHOLAR.

Ay! that's the question. (*Aside.*) I did never write any letters before that were read with such ravenous interest.

FIFTH SCHOLAR.

They say we are to have Theisticus back again.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

I will not so far disbelieve in the mercy of God.

FIFTH SCHOLAR.

They say he is to be here to-morrow.

THIRD SCHOLAR.

It must be that the Faculty, seeing our miserable state between these two antipathies, wish to neutralize their effect by the application of both at once.

FIRST SCHOLAR.

It cannot be — but look — he comes!

(*Enter* REGIUS, *very ill, his hair disordered — a napkin hanging from his overcoat pocket — in abstraction.*)

REGIUS.

Over clouded all, all swept
By a hurricane while I slept,
The fairy labyrinth
Each crystal plinth
Splintered and in sunder snapt.

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Can a man be punished in this world for exposing a counterfeit? Would I had studied law! Is it libellous to warn the world of an epidemic? But, no. It is not the law I fear. No! No! it is my public. What I did was done in furtherance of my office. O good Seer of Königsberg! — Avast! I will not think it — Philosophy cannot be owned like a patent medicine. It cannot be bought and sold — Not bought? — And am I not a dealer? O Rhadamanthus, judge between us as which is the Sophist and which Socrates?

But to pre-empt Kant! To file a claim on Hegel! To name himself — O monstrous! — "The American!" —

And I th' acknowledged leader of our thought.
The local incubator under whose wing philosophies were laid.
I with the sympathy to touch the eggs
And say which ones would hatch and which was cold. — I — I —
Have hatched — this crocodile — comfort in that
I hatched him! Without me he could not claim the shell that sticks to him.

(REGIUS *has not yet taken his seat.* THEISTICUS *is seen in the doorway — he comes forward.* — REGIUS *does not see him till he is close. They then walk half around each other, eying each other fiercely.*)

THEISTICUS.

Pluto, I fear thee not!

REGIUS.

But *I* fear *thee!* Thou hast seduced my flock.

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THEISTICUS.

I found thy flock on the road to the slaughter house.

REGIUS.

Oh, devil's impudence! I pruned the fruit,
And reverently laid each one to the sun,
Until an hornet stung them.
Thy poisonous Agnosticism — for
Such it is, despite the honey taste,
Has blighted all the crop — Thou art a devil.

THEISTICUS.

Thou pompous vacuum!
Nature abhors thee.
They told me I was set to teach some boys.
I found a batch of aged casuists.
They told me I should fill a sage's seat —
I found myself successor to a madman.

REGIUS.

(*Aside.*) (Poison! poison!)

THEISTICUS.

I took the means to bring their nature back:
I gave them boyish treatment — lines to learn,
Latin to construe — useful facts to know,
And sometimes the sane contact of the birch.
Nothing I touched upon could injure them,
And from their innocent milk teeth I kept
The sour-sweet of green philosophy. —
Only one subject did I teach to them
With anything like serious intent,
And that the subject — as thou knowest well
My subject — which I will not name to thee.

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REGIUS.

(*Aside.*) (Wormwood ! wormwood !)

THEISTICUS.

And what didst thou ? — in a most scurrilous sheet
Which thou thyself dost edit — thou didst print
A villanous and blasphemous attack,
Which, striking at my system, injured me
And the all-hallowed name of thine own country —
Whereat, not for myself, but for my land
Th' American system of philosophy,
I vowed thy ruin — and if courts of law,
Circular letters, and advertisements —
Framed to destroy the fame of very Plato —
Can put thy farthing candle out,
Regius, thou art foredoomed —

REGIUS.

(*Aside.*) I do fear this man.
He is, in the very essence, agnostical
And hurtful to my spirit — what may he do
If he his curst philosophy dilates,
And throws about to ripen in men's minds ?
If in a soil
Theisticus shall flourish — Regius dies.
(*Aloud.*)
Hence, braggart —
Thou hast bragged thyself a name,
Hast bragged a place — a post — a prominence —
A creed — a *pou sto* of existence.
Thy Hegel brag
Has raised a kind of Hegel storm in Boston,

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And thou dost very cleverly indeed
Make Hegel while the Hegel sun is shining.
Hegel at best was but a lesser light,
A second and subsidiary star.
Philosophy has many such a drudge.

THEISTICUS.

Antichrist! Antichrist! mention him not!

REGIUS.

He was a man of talent — as are you.
Respectable attainment — but small scope. —
Misunderstanding Kant — he yet contrived
To be a very useful follower
— As you are.
(*Aside.*)
I have the antidote at last. Thank Zeus!
And I'll exterminate and rout the brute.
(*Aloud.*)
And, furthermore, within a week I said
A good word for you as a Hegelite,
Before a little social club of ours.
I said you had done pretty work for Hegel.

THEISTICUS.

(*Beside himself.*)
Regius, thou liest!

REGIUS.

Theisticus,
I feel that Hegel would have grieved
To see you now.

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THEISTICUS.

How dare you speak the name of Hegel to me?

REGIUS.

How dare you blow your wind-philosophy
Upon my class, and thrust your bullying self
Between my charges and my fostering care?

THEISTICUS.

Mother Superior! I'll burn your convent!
I'll pluck your fame out by the fibrous roots,
Scatter your classes, drive you from your chair,
And leave you chairless — cheerless — destitute.
The world shall know, if I have life to do 't,
The temper in which philosophers dispute.

(*Exit.*)

REGIUS (*to the class*).

Who scores?

CLASS.

You do — you do! You drove him from the room!

REGIUS.

Ah, if he do not drive me from my home.

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ACT V.

LAST SCENE. — REGIUS'S *study late at night, a single lamp.* — REGIUS *in dressing-gown and slippers, haggard and white.*

REGIUS.

Darkness! all darkness! The half-risen sun
Eclipsed in gloom and terror. My best friends
Doubt of my course and shake their heads at me;
And fagged and broken by seven sleepless nights,
I enter my own study to find this —
A letter. 'Tis from fateful Caveator.
(*Reads.*)
"Courage! all goes not ill. The Overseers
Have peremptorily refused to grant
A hearing to the mean Theisticus.
His charges shall be passed on by themselves.
They will not have a trial or display.
This means the matter will blow over soon."

REGIUS.

Shallow deception! what it means is rather
I may not have a chance to plead my cause.
I am denied the right of my defence.
Gagged, bound, excluded, judged! Oh, horrible!
The meeting is to-night. My judges now,
Even now, may have passed upon me
— And I dumb,

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I thought to-day, as I passed through the yard,
The janitor of Weld looked coldly on me.
These hints and forecasts of impending doom
Are often felt by dumb, unthinking things,
As dogs and roosters, cats and scrubbing-women.
They say the week ere Socrates was killed,
His favorite linnet would not sing at all,
But moulted, tho' it was not moulting-time
(A thing no natural bird is known to do),
And dropped his feathers, one by one, i' the cage,
Making his master this sweet testament.
Regius, thy feathers are all dropping off!
Thy friends avoid thee — for, like Socrates,
Thou art become a prey to politics,
And powers thou canst not see
Are massed against thee.

O thou, old desk, faithful recipient,
Companion, confidant, tried loyal lover,
He thou has served so well, bids thee adieu!
Farewell! and mayst thou spread thy patient back
For some more prosperous, happier roomfellow.
Thou old arm-chair — specific comforter!
In which a thousand hours I have napped out,
Comfort *him* too — I would not leave my place —
With anything like curses on my lips.

(*A knock at door; enter* MARY, *the maid.*)

MARY.

Your muffins, sir —

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